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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

We congratulate the cities and people of America upon the candor and fearlessness with which their representatives have in this Conference faced the problem of the relation of the public to public utilities. The Conference has been helpful in its interchange of opinion and experience, and especially in its development of the idea of the community of interest among the cities. With that made plain, we can now proceed with a program of inter-city helpfulness which must be the permanent outcome for good from the Conference.

We recommend:

That no general conclusion be formulated upon the abstract question of municipal ownership, but rather we express our judgment to be that municipalities should be given, in all instances, the power to municipalize public utilities, the expediency of its exercise being at any time and place, and with regard to any particular utility, a matter for local determination.

That we make no general determination as between State Board and Local or Home-rule regulation of public service corporations; that we do, however, declare that the franchise-making power should in all cases be local; that municipally owned utilities should be subject to local control only; that in large cities local regulation is plainly to be preferred; and that, in all cases, the principles of home-rule should be preserved by at least leaving it to the people of a city, of whatever size, to determine whether they desire to act for themselves or to call in a State Board, if one exists, either to regulate or to aid the local authorities in regulating privately owned local utilities.

That we endorse the idea of the establishment of the Utilities Bureau, as a nation-wide inter-city agency for bringing the combined ability and experience of all our cities to the service of each city which may face a public utility problem. Through it, we meet the combination of private interests with a combination of public interests, and to the specialized experts which private interests thus mass in defence of one another, we oppose the skill, experience, and resources of the united cities of the country.

We recommend:

That the trustees of the Utilities Bureau proceed to its further organization, outlining a plan by which its support may be assured and its services made available. In this connection, we suggest, for the consideration of the trustees, that an office be provided, records kept, experts be employed, and that cities, which can legally do so, contribute on some equitable basis to the expense of the Bureau, in excess of its earnings, when in the service of cities actually using its facilities in the solutions of particular problems.

We vote our hearty recognition of the public service performed by Mayor Blankenburg in calling this Conference; to Mayors Mitchel, Harrison, Shroyer and Baker, for their sympathetic assistance to him; our appreciation of the gracious hospitality of the city of Philadelphia, and our thanks to the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

Unanimously adopted Saturday, November 14, 1914.

The following members of the Conference served on the Committee on Recommendations:

Hon. Newton D. Baker, Mayor of Cleveland, *Chairman*.

Hon. John Purroy Mitchel, Mayor of New York.

Hon. H. C. Hocken, Mayor of Toronto.

Hon. T. C. Thompson, Mayor of Chattanooga.

Hon. Frederick W. Donnelly, Mayor of Trenton.

Hon. John M. Eshleman, President, Railroad Commission of California.

Hon. Milo R. Maltbie, New York Public Service Commission, 1st district.

Hon. Edward D. O'Brien, Director of Utilities, Seattle.

Hon. Charles E. Merriam, Alderman, Chicago.

Mr. Theodore F. Thieme, Citizens' League of Indiana, Fort Wayne.